United Nations A/73/95

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 June 2018
English
Original: Arabic/English/Spanish

Seventy-third session
Item 99 (v) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/73/50.

18-10418 (E) 020718 050718

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 72/48 on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the issue of the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

2. Pursuant to that request, a note verbale was sent to Member States on 5 February 2018 inviting them to provide information on the subject. The replies received are set out in section II below. Any views received after 15 May 2018 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs[1] in the language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Governments

Austria

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Current challenges to disarmament and non-proliferation, such as a complicated international security environment and rapid advancements in science and technology related to weapons, require a cooperative, multilateral approach. Austria considers the strengthening of multilateralism one of its foreign policy principles. Support for effective multilateralism is also one of the guiding principles of the European Union Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, published in 2016, and the European Union Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, adopted in 2003. Through these instruments, the European Union strongly supports the expanding membership, universalization, full implementation and enforcement of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control treaties and regimes.

Efforts by Austria on multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation have implied both political support for the multilateral instruments and financial support for relevant international agencies, with the general objective of enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of the multilateral regime in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. In that vein, Austria has acceded to most multilateral treaties in this domain and participates actively in efforts to universalize them and further improve their implementation. For instance, in 2017, Austria assumed the presidency of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Austria continues to promote multilateralism through further engagement, including through support for the establishment of new legally binding instruments.

Austria is working to overcome the current lack of effectiveness of the United Nations disarmament machinery, in particular that of the Conference on Disarmament, and the resulting absence of substantive multilateral disarmament negotiations. Strategies for revitalizing existing disarmament forums and rebuilding habits of cooperation are required to overcome the prevailing global and bilateral trust deficit and its negative impact on disarmament efforts.

In particular, in the nuclear domain, multilateral forums are indispensable to achieving a nuclear weapon-free world. Austria strongly supports the existing international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime, with the Treaty on

[1] www.un.org/disarmament/.

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as its cornerstone. Austria continues to underline the importance of advocating for the preservation of existing nuclear-related agreements, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and various other bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements. Austria favours the further development of this regime, for instance, through negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

In this respect, Austria actively supports and has recently acceded to the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This instrument is important first of all as a contribution to the implementation of the disarmament obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is equally important as the first tangible result of multilateral nuclear disarmament since the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[9 April 2018]

The multilateral decision-making process of the United Nations, in strict observance of the Charter and the principles of international law, is the only viable mechanism for preventing the international system from becoming a mechanism for the imposition and legitimization of unilateral measures contrary to the multipolar, just and equitable world order we need.

Seeking solutions through multilateral negotiations and acknowledging the need to reach collective agreements are the most effective means of safeguarding international peace and security.

Multilateral negotiations that are open to all States on an equal footing guarantee and facilitate universality, as well as the commitment of States to the agreements, measures and instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation.

International challenges today reinforce the need for multilateralism. Existing disputes within the international system and the threats that may arise in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation must be resolved peacefully and through negotiations.

The impasse in the negotiations within the framework of the multilateral disarmament machinery, which has persisted for several years owing to the lack of political will on the part of certain countries, makes it all the more necessary to intensify multilateral efforts.

Unilateral measures and bilateral or regional agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation are no substitute for the scope and meaning of agreements reached through multilateral negotiations. Multilateralism must be the core principle underpinning all negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, of which Cuba is a member, has reiterated the absolute validity of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as its determination to promote multilateralism as a core principle underpinning negotiations on those matters, including on the priority theme of nuclear disarmament.

As a State Member of the United Nations and a State party to numerous treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation, Cuba reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, preservation and strengthening of multilateralism.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

Ecuador is particularly pleased that the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was able to agree by consensus, in June 2017, on the recommendations relating to the objectives and agenda of that session, which clearly indicates that multilateralism can and should be the fundamental principle underpinning disarmament work. It also expresses its satisfaction that, in April 2017, after almost two decades of no agreement, the Disarmament Commission managed to agree on recommendations concerning one of the items on its agenda: confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Ecuador considers that these actions and others taken by the General Assembly are very positive as they have reaffirmed, in an international environment marked by the unilateral actions of certain countries, the need to promote multilateralism as the principle mechanism for guaranteeing world peace and security.

As a defender and promoter of international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, Ecuador supports all actions designed to prevent conflict and also supports the international instruments that will bring about the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, it is opposed to an arms race in outer space.

Ecuador believes that international meetings and summits on issues of universal concern, such as those related to nuclear security, should be open to all States on an equal footing, in line with the principle of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

El Salvador

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

El Salvador, a founding country of the United Nations firmly committed to international peace and security as established in its Charter, recognizes the importance of promoting multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation and maintains its strong determination to do so with a view to working jointly, effectively and constructively with all countries at the global level to fulfil our international commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation through consensus, multilateral negotiations and concrete decisions, in accordance with the principles of verification, irreversibility and transparency, in order to achieve progress towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Accordingly, El Salvador is committed to working tirelessly for disarmament and channels its efforts into various regional and international forums and organizations to support actions aimed at strengthening the general disarmament and non-proliferation regime and renewing the commitment of the international community to achieving progress towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction, thereby raising awareness of the humanitarian consequences and disasters that could result from the use of such weapons and the threat posed by their mere presence in the world.

El Salvador reaffirms its right, and is cognizant of its obligation as a State that does not possess weapons of mass destruction and a State party to most international legal instruments in this field, to work tirelessly for general disarmament and

non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and to support all efforts made through the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and other multilateral forums, bearing in mind that multilateralism is the only way to ensure effective measures to that end.

El Salvador is fully confident that through multilateral forums and with the support of countries that share the same desire to achieve a world free of weapons of mass destruction, it will be possible to develop initiatives and projects towards the complete and irreversible elimination of such weapons.

Georgia

[Original: English]
[23 February 2018]

Georgia accords special attention to the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. Georgia affirms that nuclear non-proliferation, continued progress in nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy are vital and impose responsibilities on all States. It stresses the fundamental responsibility of States, consistent with their respective national and international obligations, to maintain the effective security of all weapons of mass destruction, including weapons of mass destruction materials, and to prevent non-State actors from acquiring such materials and obtaining information or technology required to use them for malicious purposes.

Georgia recognizes the importance of multilateral instruments that address disarmament and non-proliferation and urges all States:

To accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction;

- To take urgent action to end the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- To support efforts to advance disarmament globally;
- To maintain a moratorium on nuclear test explosions pending entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and to call upon States to sign and ratify the treaty;
- To work with all States towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in order to prevent proliferation and advance disarmament.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[5 May 2018]

Army Command wishes to state the following:

Lebanon supports taking effective measures to address threats to international peace and security arising from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It supports conventions on disarmament and arms control that are concluded by multilateral negotiations in which a large number of countries, regardless of their size and power, participate, with a view to achieving complete nuclear disarmament under strict international controls. Lebanon believes that promoting multilateralism is essential to advancing negotiations and developing more comprehensive global

standards in that regard. It reiterates that it is committed to multilateral cooperation, because that is an important means of pursuing and achieving common objectives in disarmament and non-proliferation. Meanwhile, the Israeli enemy maintains a massive arsenal of weapons of mass destruction that constitutes a direct threat not only to Lebanon, but to all States in the region, as well as to international peace and security.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[9 May 2018]

Mexico has historically been an advocate of multilateralism as the most effective way to address international challenges, and an actor convinced that the United Nations has the capacity to bring about peace and security. Mexico believes that the peaceful settlement of disputes is a point on which our interests and principles converge with a view to reaching agreements and forging strategies to address the challenges in areas as diverse as international security, development policy, climate change, human rights and the progressive development of international law.

Accordingly, on various occasions, Mexico, along with other States, has promoted multilateral actions to bolster disarmament and non-proliferation, thus confirming the country's conviction that multilateralism is the way to foster cooperation and friendly relations among States and thereby strengthen international peace and security.

Mexico promotes the full implementation, universality and entry into force of the international instruments on the elimination of chemical and biological weapons, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing and the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

Mexico will continue to submit draft resolutions to the First Committee of the General Assembly, either individually or with other like-minded countries, with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mexico participated actively and decisively in the conference to negotiate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted on 7 July 2017, which it views as consistent with the obligation contained in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, thereby contributing to its implementation.

Mexico continues to attach great importance to the strengthening of the regime established by Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) as well as its effective implementation.

Mexico recognizes the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency toward the peaceful use of nuclear energy and non-proliferation, in particular the safeguards system and the physical protection of nuclear material, and of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization with regard to the non-proliferation regime.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[5 May 2018]

Portugal believes that multilateralism is the most efficient way to attain the objective of maintaining peace and security at an international level, through disarmament and non-proliferation. On this issue, Portugal is party to the most

relevant treaties and other international and regional mechanisms regarding the prevention and elimination of threats posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Portugal also cooperates with international organizations that work in those areas.

Among the mechanisms mentioned above, we note the following: the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare; the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its protocols (including amendments); the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on Cluster Munitions; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the Convention on Nuclear Safety; and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendment. Portugal is party to all these instruments.

Portugal also participates in the following export control regimes: the Missile Technology Control Regime; the Australia Group; the Nuclear Suppliers Group; the Zangger Committee; and the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

Portugal has participated in outreach activities that aim to promote the universalization of the main treaties and other legal instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation, especially with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, and through formal and informal contacts and initiatives such as seminars, workshops and meetings.

Following its efforts in the area of disarmament at a multilateral level, Portugal was among the first 50 States to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, which is the first disarmament legal instrument to be adopted by the United Nations in the past decade.

Concerning nuclear disarmament, the risk posed by those countries that possess and seek to develop nuclear weapons has been recognized, especially in regions that are politically and socially instable, which pose a greater threat potential.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, Portugal defends the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, always considering the importance of the existence of confidence building measures among nuclear and non-nuclear States.

Portugal also hopes that the Conference on Disarmament adopts, as soon as possible, a programme of work that supports the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. To that end, Portugal highlights the importance of the implementation of the 2010 action plan for nuclear disarmament, in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and believes that the effective implementation of the action plan should include bringing an end to the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. Portugal has also signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and has proceeded with outreach activities regarding its universalization.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[5 May 2018]

- Qatar is strongly committed to the promoting multilateralism in disarmament and non-proliferation. In that connection, it should be noted that multilateralism is a key negotiating tool for achieving a wide range of goals. Qatar has acceded to all the relevant treaties, namely, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Qatar is a very active participant in relevant conferences, forums and meetings, and it is a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Qatar reiterates that both total disarmament and non-proliferation are of vital importance.
- Qatar believes that it is important to move towards arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament on the basis of universality, multilateralism, non-discrimination and transparency, with a view to achieving comprehensive and complete disarmament under strict international control. Doing so would ensure the international validity of negotiations in that regard.
- Qatar calls for the development of disarmament and non-proliferation strategies and hopes that the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be successful. Qatar also calls for the expeditious entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, because it will help to strengthen international peace and security.
- Qatar affirms the need to strengthen and revitalize the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral negotiation forum. It participates in the meetings of the Conference as an observer and is seeking to become a permanent member.
- Qatar believes in the role that international and civil society organizations play in disarmament and non-proliferation, and the relevant Qatari bodies participate in the meetings of those organizations.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Multilateral international cooperation in the area of arms control and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is an efficient instrument to prevent and eliminate the threats posed by the spread of arms and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

For this reason, Ukraine is a party to a number of international treaties and conventions: the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; and other international instruments aimed at contributing to international security and global peace.

Ukraine also participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative and all the international export control regimes; the Missile Technology Control Regime; the Australia Group; the Nuclear Suppliers Group; the Zangger Committee; and the

Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

To comply with the obligations arising from its membership in the international treaties and organizations, Ukraine has developed the relevant legal basis and established State control over international transfers of goods intended for military purposes and goods and technologies that could be used for the creation of weapons of mass destruction.

Owing to its participation in the above-mentioned international institutions, Ukraine has the potential to anticipate risks of non-authorized use of goods intended for international transfers and to prevent them by consulting with States members of the export control regimes and exchanging information on risks related to transfers.